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ABSTRACT

The Each One Teach One (EOTO) literacy project undertaken by universities and colleges is one of five methods of conducting adult education programs in India. A basis for an understanding of EOTO is a definition of literacy--a person is considered literate if he or she has mastered accuracy and fluency in word recognition, comprehension of material read, and critical thinking. University students implement EOTO, but any literate person can volunteer. EOTO follows the Laubach methods of literacy. The characteristics of adult learning programs based on these methods are as follows: use of common sounds and phonetics to make the learning material more relevant to the learners; use of pictures to help in associated learning of the sounds and pictures; and association of the printed word with the common sound, picture, and its use in everyday life. Pamphlets, teaching aids, and flash cards have been designed. EOTO, suggested by Laubach, has been in use since the 1930s. It uses volunteers and requires no extra funds, once the basic materials are printed. This one-on-one teaching method allows a special bond to be built between tutor and student. Laubach recommends that teachers provide positive reinforcement of every little progress; speak and progress slowly; and never show disapproval or disappointment. The place of study varies to accommodate tutors and students. At the end of an academic year, a contact program is organized for all the neo-literates. Transportation is provided. (YLB)

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Each One Teach One Project

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| Definition of Literacy | Laubach Methods | Each One Teach One: Laubach's Methods and Materials |

ED 416 308

DEFINITION OF LITERACY

Before reviewing the literature it is necessary to examine some of the various definitions of literacy, with an emphasis on how the term has evolved and what being literate implies. One of the earliest definitions of literacy was the "ability to read and write" (Oxenham, 1980, pp.15). However, this definition has evolved to more complex statements. For instance, Chew (1984) defines it as "competence in language arts: listening, speaking, reading and writing." Graff (1987) argues that literacy is a set of techniques of communication that are intended to decode and reproduce written or printed messages. Ellsworth (1994) adds that literacy also involves critical and creative thinking. Browse (1992) views literacy as a way of learning, which "helps the individual to enhance the understanding of self and the world" (pp.164). From a developing-world perspective Freire (1986) views literacy as a tool that helps individuals to become conscious of the world around them.

However, in Graff's (1987) view literacy does not function as an isolated factor to enhance development. Rather, literacy is both a more complex phenomenon and the first step in a process. The acquisition of writing and reading abilities has to be exercised by individuals so that literacy can become a useful tool and not merely a label to identify individuals.

One approach to literacy has been to relate the literacy standard to a certain level of formal education. Thus a person who has studied for a certain number of years in a primary school is considered literate. Some educationists have suggested achieving literacy rate upto 4-5 years of primary schooling.

The expert committee on the standardization of Education Statistics, which was convened in 1951, defined the literate person as one who can "both read with understanding and write a short simple statement on his everyday life." A knowledge of the rudiments of arithmetic is often included in the attributes of a literate person.

Even though in 1966 the concept of literacy was evolved, a precise definition still does not exist because of a large number of variables literacy is dependent upon. The general picture of adult literacy in India has been based on National Census Returns or Sample Surveys. In India the National Census is generally undertaken at an interval of ten years usually at the beginning at each decade. The only way to estimate the magnitude of illiteracy in between the two decades

is to make assumptions and estimates based on the prevailing trends.

Another problem faced in deciding as to who should be counted as literate is the age. All children below the age of 6 cannot be expected to master the basic skills of literacy. The large population of children under six years of age account for lowering the overall literacy rates of the country. The literacy data in the census is completed on the basis of total population in the country, for example, illiteracy rate for the total population in 1971 was 70.5 percent whereas for the population for aged 5 and over it was 65.5 percent. The illiteracy rates for the age group 10 and over and 15 and over were 63.2 percent and 65.9 percent respectively (Unesco, 1989).

For census purposes in 1941 the definition that was adopted by the enumerators was that a person should be able to read and write a postcard in simple language. Till 1961 the same definition was used as the working definition of literacy. The test for reading was the ability to read any simple letter either in print or in manuscript form, even if the person could read one of the examples in the enumerator's handbook with facility he was taken to have passed the test for reading. Similarly the test for writing was prescribed as the ability to write a simple letter, but the test of literacy was satisfied if the person could with understand write a few simple sentences in any language.

Both the 1971 and 1981 censuses defined a literate person as one who could read and write with understanding in any language. A person who could merely read but could not write was not taken to be a literate person. Formal education or passing of any education standard was not a requirement. In case of doubt, the subjects were tested for reading by their ability to read any portion of printed matter in the enumerator's instructions. Similarly for writing he/she was required to write a few sentences with understanding in any language. However, census data in most cases was based on self-enumeration. The enumerators normally did not give any literacy test. They depended on the reply of the respondents.

A minimum set of learning requirements in the area of reading, writing and arithmetic to be achieved at the end of the first phase of literacy has been prepared by the Directorate of Adult Education, Ministry of Education. These have been worked out keeping in view the fact that literacy which is imparted in the basic course of adult education should be up to the point from where there is no chance of relapse into illiteracy after leaving the classes and they are in a position to use literacy in transacting business of everyday life.

However, for the purpose of this paper we will follow the definition provided by Unesco in 1989. According to Unesco, qualitatively speaking a person is considered literate only if he has mastered the following skills and attitudes:

Accuracy and fluency in word recognition in any language: He/She must recognize words in a meaningful context, read them accurately and fluently. If he/she 'reads' words by spelling them out or by guessing them, he cannot be taken to have crossed the hurdle of illiteracy.

Comprehension of material read: He/She must understand 90 percent of the what he reads if the material is written in a vocabulary known to him and the content is not beyond his experience.

Critical thinking: He/She should be able to discuss objectively the ideas acquired through reading.

Factors bearing on the problem of literacy: A wide variety of factors inhibit literacy from taking its hold on people of India. Experience has shown that geographical, linguistic, economic social and political factors have been and still are played an important role in the promotion of literacy efforts. While planning and implementing literacy programs, these facts need to be kept in mind.

Geographical factors: The major factor contributing to the growth of illiteracy is that there are many remote areas of the country which are inaccessible. The percent of literacy is the lowest in Arunachal Pradesh and in hilly areas of the country mainly for the reason that the area is isolated due to physical and natural factors including deserts, droughts and floods. Providing educational facilities for a widely scattered and isolated population is a very difficult problem. Lack of transport combined with inadequate communication poses problems in the organization of literacy classes. In such areas the availability of teachers, supervisors, teaching/learning materials and follow up facilities cannot be maintained at desirable levels.

Linguistic factors: India has many languages along with many scripts, ethnic groups and cultures, so the problem of imparting literacy becomes very complex. There are 15 scheduled languages according to the Constitution of Independent India. Each of scheduled languages has dialects varying from 10-97, thus implementing one model plan all over the country does not serve the purpose. There is a need for customized education plan for each region.

Economic factors: Agriculture and handicrafts were the two main pillars of the country's economy at the time of independence. About 80 percent of the country's population was engaged in agriculture and it was responsible for 80percent of the national income. Even today, the majority of population is engaged either in agriculture or is involved with a cottage industry. Several factors such as pressure on land uncertainty of rainfall, floods, poor variety of plants, reduction of fertility in the soil, lack of transportation facilities, poor credit facilities etc. keeps the farming communities and most artisans constantly laboring in order to feed their families. The farmers and artisans thus have no time or energy left to devote to education. It is for the same reason that the young of the family is directed towards the fields instead of the school.

National Policy on Adult Education: It is important to review India's policy on adult education to see in which bracket does Each-One-Teach-One fits. Acknowledging illiteracy as a major impediment in the national development, the Indian leaders, began efforts on improving the literacy situation soon after independence. Thus after several meetings of various committees on literacy problem and the recommendations for its promotion the first report was finalized in 1948 (Unesco, Literacy Situation). The committee recommended broadening of the concept of adult education to include general education, mobilization of students, government employees, and refugees and to use films and other audio visual media for strengthening of the program.

Towards the end of the second five year plan, due to a deeper concern for the widespread illiteracy, it was realized that a continuing high rate of illiteracy and rapid social and economic progress were not compatible. Consequently the emphasis was laid on more harmonious effort for literacy. The Third five year plan stressed the need for pooling of resources in men and money, mobilization of voluntary workers including school teachers and development of literacy work at the village levels and also in every city and town so that it took the shape of popular movement. In 1962 the National Fundamental Education Centre (now the Directorate of Adult Education, Ministry of Education) organized a seminar that stressed need for literacy should be looked at as an investment, and making those sectors of adult population literate which were likely to bring in maximum returns, thus the focus was on factory workers and farmers. It pointed out that anything less than functional literacy would be a waste of effort and resources. The report of the Education Commission 1964-1966 appointed by the Government of India referring to adult literacy recommended both mass campaigns as well as selective approaches to tackle the special sectors of adult illiterates such as industrial workers.

The national policy on education emphasized the importance of adult education in no uncertain terms and stressed the liquidation of illiteracy in the shortest possible time. It stressed that eradication of mass illiteracy was a prerequisite for promoting participation in the working of democratic institutions, and hastening the process of national development. It was further pointed out that industrial undertakings in the public sector, teachers and students should be actively involved in organizing literacy campaigns.

By the fourth five year plan (1966) a proposal for launching a mass literacy program was submitted. It was emphasized that for maximum benefits adult literacy should be made functional in character and linked up with the work and life of the people. The plan proposed setting up a National Adult Education Board to mobilize the necessary political and popular leadership.

Additionally, international trends also influenced the approach towards adult education. The World Education Ministers' Conference held in Iran 1965 had suggested that to appeal to the masses literacy must be associated with everyday life. Consequently, a number of literacy programs were initiated which concentrated on the needs of particular learner-groups and tried to link the content of the programs with various development objectives, both in rural and urban areas.

The fifth five year plan emphasized removal of unemployment and provision of minimum basic needs, such as drinking water, adult literacy, elementary education, health care, rural roads and rural housing. Adult education including literacy, functional development and creation of awareness among the poor regarding the impediments.

In the sixth five year plan, considering the need for removal of adult illiteracy for the economic development a program for adult literacy was included in the 20 point economic program. Central Advisory Board of Education in its 39th session held in June 1983 suggested that a change in the approach of adult education program so that it was not only limited to certain but covered all illiterate population of the country. Some of the important recommendations related to the better involvement of students of higher education, working out linkages with development program, more utilization of mass media and giving greater impetus to voluntary agencies. These recommendations were:

1. To involve college students on a larger scale emphasizing, that the groups of students should work for a given period of time with an identified group of persons or a village.
2. To better utilize the mass media facilities including satellite telecast to provide adult and continuing education.
3. To recognize the important role of both voluntary organizations and local bodies in promoting adult education and integrate their efforts in the adult education campaigns.

The target group: Based on the past experience 15-35 age group was selected since it seemed to be feasible both from point of coverage and the needed impact on other programs. Moreover, 6-14 age group was covered under formal education. However, if the upper age limit person who are above 35 are not denied the opportunity in case they wish to participate.

The strategies for action: Based on the policy guidelines, the operational strategies of the program were based on the following assumptions:

- To make the adult education program, as visualized by the Board a reality it is important that all sections of the population appreciate the need for adult education and play their respective roles; the rich and the poor
- Adult education must be linked in terms of policy and implementation
- Adult education must form an indispensable input in all sectors of development where the participation of the beneficiaries is essential to the fulfillment of development objectives. The literacy component should be built into all developmental schemes.
- Instead of creating new organizations and agencies the existing institutions must be utilized and strengthened.

Additionally mass media- namely films, television, radio, newspapers, publicity and posters were to be used to enhance the literacy level of the nation.

The adult education program has since been carried out mainly through the projects undertaken under the schemes of

1. Rural Functional Literacy
2. State Adult Education through Voluntary Agencies
3. Shramik Vidyapeeth or Workers' Education Institutes

4. Nehru Yuvak Kendras

5. Universities and Colleges

The Each One Teach One falls under the projects undertaken by the universities and colleges. It was implemented basically by the University students, even though any one who was literate could volunteer to teach. During the last two decades various attempts have been made not only to outline what obligation universities have towards the community but also how best they can meet this obligation. A number of seminars and conferences have in one way or the other thrown some light on how universities colleges can help in promoting the cause of adult education. In September 1982, the university grants commission set up a working group to elaborate on involvement of universities colleges and student community in adult education program.

The Indian University Association for continuing education aims to

1. Conduct and provide facilities for research experiment and pilot projects in the field of adult education
2. Undertake training programs
3. Evaluate the work done by universities giving a new impetus to university involvement in programs of adult education.

For the sake of this paper, we will focus only on a section of adult literacy campaign that involved the universities and colleges.. EOTO follows Laubach Methods of literacy. We will first review these methods and later specifically elaborate on EOTO.

LAUBACH METHODS

The first methods used to promote literacy and many of the prevalent ones even today are based on the methods popularized by Frank Laubach. On his visit to India in the late 1940s Laubach discovered that the old literacy methods were going slow only because their focus was not on the common words used in the everyday language. Thus the unfamiliar words represented only the written text and held no meaning for the adult learner. Therefore Laubach recommended the use of common words and sounds used in the printed word to both motivate the learners and hasten the learning process. (Frank Laubach - The Each One Teach One way).

Laubach was one of the first adult educator in India who had recognized the importance of preparing basic word lists prior to the development of lessons for illiterates understood and used frequently. Basic words are those which are regarded as sufficient to express ordinary ideas in a given language and they are prepared after listing one million words. His method was based on the use of simple phonetics, pictures of the words described, and the written word itself (in the language spoken by the adult). For example, for a Hindi primer, he started with the first vowel Aa that basically is supposed to be a part of every consonant in Hindi. The word associated with Aa is Aam- meaning mango. The picture associated with mango was somewhat related to the shape of written word Aa. Thus, every time the student sees a mango, the picture of the written word emerges in his/her mind. Another example is the consonant Ba. The word associated with Ba is Bania- meaning money lender. The picture associated with Bania is that of a man with a big belly, so that everytime, the student sees either the money lender or a person with a fat belly, he/she visualizes the letter Ba.

So, the characteristics of the adult learning programs based on the Laubach methods were:

- Use of common sounds and phonetics to make the learning material more relevant to the learners
- Use of pictures to help in associated learning of the sounds and pictures
- Association of the printed word with the common sound, the picture and its use in everyday life

Based on these methods, various pamphlets, teaching aids, flash cards were designed. Laubach listed the following reasons, other than the lack of funds, for the slow rate of progress in adult literacy campaigns:

- The student (adult learner) felt "inferior" to the teacher, who, in most cases was his peer or younger
- Using vocabulary unfamiliar to the adult learner
- Learnt material not put to immediate use
- Formal set up of a classroom too threatening for the adult learner

Laubach's methods were the first methods of adult literacy used in India. However, when due to funds, and low motivational level of the students or the stigma attached with going to school in adult age, the literacy rates were not as high as expected. Laubach then explained that the illiterate and the marginally literate are spread all over, with varying levels of literacy. It is hard to group them even on the basis of literacy skills because of different backgrounds, experience and the kind of attention needs. As mentioned earlier, adults resist learning after a certain age for the stigma attached to the non-literate. To save them embarrassment, motivate them more, and give them exclusive attention Dr. Frank Laubach suggested "Each- One-Teach-One Program" (EOTO). EOTO has been in action since the 1930s. EOTO uses volunteers and requires no extra funds, once the basic materials are printed. Furthermore, this one on one teaching method allows a special bond to be built between the tutor and the taught, which is the foundation of any learning process.

Laubach suggested EOTO program for the beginners as this one on one method proved very beneficial to promote a rapport between the student and the teacher and to allow more flexibility of meeting times and place compared to conventional night classes with 20-30 students per teacher.

EACH ONE TEACH ONE: LAUBACH'S METHODS AND MATERIALS

The guidelines given by Laubach for the adult tutors are very useful for any teacher. However, they specifically apply to Each-One-Teach-One. Laubach suggested that a teacher should make the student feel triumphant for every little progress, have confidence in the teacher to make him literate, and especially feel rested at the end of the lesson. With regard to the teaching techniques for adult learners (specially with no experience of formal schooling) Laubach suggested that the teacher must speak and progress slowly, avoid pointing at the student and gently point at the words in the books. Teachers should avoid hunting for words with their finger, as this might confuse the student. Additionally, the teachers must be prepared and must never stammer.

Additionally, Laubach gave a list of what not to do when dealing with an adult learner. He emphasized that the teacher should never frown, never show disapproval or disappointment never scold, never ask a question a student cannot answer, never tell him an answer if he can tell you, never repeat after him, his correct responses. He stated that it was important to treat the adult learner like a king, for he might not be able to read but he has the wisdom of years. One

advantage of each one teach one is that since the student and the teacher sit side by side, the student does not feel that the teacher is superior to him (Medary, M., 1954).

In India adults can learn the alphabet without formal teaching by means of the phonetic charts, which are being placed on the walls of the villages where the people pass them going to and from their work. There are four to six of these charts, six letters to a chart. The shape of the letter is associated with an object whose name begins with that letter. Anybody, can easily learn six of these letter in ten minutes.

The Each One Teach One project in action - University and Colleges input: Each One Teach One (EOTO) program was basically started with the assistance of Universities and colleges as a part of using community resources and support for adult literacy. However, volunteer tutors from any sector of the literate population are welcome to join the program.

The University of Bombay and Delhi are undertaking the "Each One Teach One project" through NSS volunteers. This is a normal project of NSS (National Service Scheme) and NSS volunteers complete his/her 60 hours of NSS work in this single project. Every student volunteer has to make only one person literate with the help of 20 cards and one booklet. The volunteer teaches the concerned adult learner three days a week, for 20 weeks, at least. If desired by the student and the tutor the amount of time can be increased.

The place of study lessons also varies according to the convenience of both, the tutor and the taught. Usually, the volunteer teacher is more willing to make adjustments considering the various responsibilities of the adult learner, one of which is to earn his daily bread. Furthermore, it is suggested that each lesson be no less than one hour and no more than two hours, unless, the student insists so. The basic strategy to teach is usually introducing the topic of study, teaching the topic of study and revising the material studied. In some cases, if there is no resistance from the student, some written assignments may be given. Usually these assignments consist of writing a list of words, about five to ten times. In the advanced stages the student may be asked to write a paragraph, a short essay or a letter.

The printed materials, such as books, cards and charts are prepared by the Centre of Adult Education in the respective state. It is important to re-state the fact that every state in India has a different language with a distinct script. The cards and the other study materials imply a novel approach of teaching literacy through the names of the various parts of the human body and some other words related to them. Since the words (human body parts) used are familiar to the learners they get involved in the learning process in a short period of time. This helps them to grasp the content easily. Thirty eight words on nineteen cards cover all alphabets while the twentieth card deals with conjunct words.

Thus the project not only makes literacy very simple and relevant by using names of the parts of the human body, but it also integrates awareness and functionality by means of the booklet which gives information about various health problems and situations including preventive measures which lead the learners to health awareness. Moreover, the booklet remains with the learners permanently so it can be used for reference.

Every NSS volunteer identifies his/her own adult learner in the vicinity. The only condition is that the adult learner should be literate. The students living in hostels (or boarding schools) are usually assisted by their teachers in locating a volunteer student. Usually, there is a willing volunteer within the premises of the hostel or boarding school. Persons who have passed Standard 4 or above are not to be included in this program, since they are supposed to be directed towards a more formal schooling.

After every NSS volunteer has identified the adult learner the Professor in charge of NSS, with the help of the group leaders, will assess and certify that the identified adult learner is really illiterate or has lapsed into illiteracy through having dropped out of any of the first three standards. After a brief training the student volunteer works for 20 weeks or more with the volunteer student. The professor incharge conducts a monthly meeting of the student volunteers involved in the project and try to get feedback about the program. The expenses involved in project are quite economical and estimated to be Rs. 15/- (50 cents) per learner.

At the end of one academic year, a contact program is organized for all the neo-literates. For those coming from remote rural areas, transportation is provided. Contact program is a kind of fair, where the neo-literates can practice their newly learnt literacy skills, by reading simple charts created by the students, that carry slogans related to environment or health issues. Additionally, the adult learners are engaged in simple games, that require the use of simple mathematical skills. Also, if interested, the adult learners are allowed to put up their own stall, to display or sell any item they have produced

(literacy or craft related). Free low budget healthy recipes are distributed to further the literacy and culinary skills of the students, thereby reinforcing the fact that a healthy meal need not be expensive. This contact program is usually held in the respective colleges.

Each One Teach One program can be implemented as one of the most cost effective resources for adult education. For instance, it does not require funds to organize classrooms. Additionally, since this is a community based program and usually small communities have one common language, there is no language barrier. As for the geographical factors, even in the remotest of areas there are government offices and unconventional primary schools where both the teachers and students can make one person literate in their spare time. To be an adult tutor one does not have to have higher education. Each-One-Teach-One is like a chain process, once an adult is made literate he/she can undertake the task of educating another one and thus the process of learning can go on. An advantage of Each one teach one program is that it allows you to go as slow or as fast as you and your student would like so it is not necessary to push the student or hold him/her back.

It is important to state that though illiteracy is a big problem, keeping the neo-literates progressing on the path of literacy is no easy task. The first obstacle we encounter is the fact that nearly all the adult books and journals are too difficult for new literates. An Indian teacher said ruefully: "I have made so many people literate; but they cannot read"; this might sound absurd but considering there is not enough reading material available for adults with limited reading skills, the neo-literate falls back into illiteracy. This clearly calls for a new kind of publications to emerge. Publications that would tell popular fables in simple language with the extensive use of pictures, yet, attract adult readership. This however can be accomplished by introducing certain abstract ideas about morality or society within the stories.

Use of television: Ever since television was introduced in India, it has been used for dissemination of information and knowledge, and to make the citizens aware of functional value to special groups, such as women, youth, industrial workers and students both in rural and urban areas. In 1971 under the satellite instructional television experiment, Adult education programs packaged with general, cultural and educational value were telecast in six states. The evaluation of the program concluded that even though television reached the masses in short period of time and had great potential in educating, it was not only expensive but also extremely difficult to maintain the television sets in the rural areas.

Each one teach one's basic philosophy is to bring more volunteer teachers and volunteer students together. However like in most adult literacy programs there is a need to motivate the learners. The EOTO program respects the learner and all that the learner respects by working around his/her schedule and reading and writing about what the learner considers more important. However, sometimes there are pre-requisites to get to the ultimate goal of the learner and certain skills should be learned before a desired goal is achieved. For example, if a learner is interested in learning about sewing, he/she is told that learning simple mathematics is important to be able to measure and design a well fitted garment.

Advantages of Each-One-Teach-One program are: Since it is not a conventional classroom situation a time and venue conducive to both the teacher and the learner can be decided. Furthermore, these times can be subject to change to suit both the tutor and the taught. The learning materials can be designed around what is most important to the student for example, if the student is a farmer he can be motivated by showing a picture of rice fields and proving information about pesticides. Additionally, since it is a one on one learning the subject does not hesitate to question, contribute, agree or disagree, thus posing no threat to the identity of the learner. A high degree of flexibility creates a relaxed environment thus allowing for a good rapport formation between the student and the teacher. Since only one student is involved at any given time, there is no pressure on the student to gauge his/her performance in comparison to others, which is one of the major reasons why adult learners hesitate to get into adult education situations.

And the woods are lonely dark and deep

But I have promises to keep

And miles to go before I sleep

And miles to go before I sleep

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